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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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Briefing Notes

Consequences of a Communist Take-over in Iran

1. Establishment of a Communist regime in Iran would be a major victory in the cold war for the USSR and the entering Soviet wedge in an area which Molotov called "the center of gravity of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."
2. The prestige of the United States would ~~initially~~ be severely shaken. *in the hands of the East*
3. Two ~~other~~ long-standing Soviet objectives would be achieved by Communist control of Iran: (a) assurance that Iran would not become a Western military or air base for operations against the USSR; (b) permanent denial to the West of the oil of Iran, and an opportunity to develop it for use by the Soviet Bloc.
4. The USSR would acquire substantial military advantages in the event of war. It would presumably be able, before the outbreak of hostilities, to move troops, supplies and base establishments to the edge of the Iraqi plain, to the Persian Gulf, and to the borders of Pakistan.

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5. We do not believe that Communist control of Iran would mean an inevitable early loss to the West of other oil-producing areas in the Middle East. The states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrein are not at present especially vulnerable to Communist penetration. These and the other Arab states would almost certainly intensify security measures against domestic upheavals, and would prevent any further immediate spread of Communist control.

6. In the longer run, however, Soviet political warfare in the Middle East would be greatly facilitated, and therefore the chances of an eventual loss to the West of the remainder of Middle Eastern oil would be increased. The infiltration of Communist agents into the territories bordering Iran would become comparatively easy. The real or pretended achievements of Communism in dealing with a Moslem Middle East state could be effectively propagandized. We believe that Iraq would be the most vulnerable of the oil-producing states to the increased political warfare capabilities of the USSR.

7. The effects on the Arab and South Asian states of a Communist take-over in Iran would depend in large measure upon how it was accomplished and how the West reacted to it. Assumption of power in Iran by the Communist Tudeh Party, without overt intervention of Soviet armed forces, would be unlikely to produce a strong reaction in other countries of the Middle East. The character of their reaction would depend on such factors as Tudeh's success in preserving the appearance of independence for Iran, the degree of popular acceptance

of Tudeh rule, and the manner in which the US and the USSR treated the Iranian government.

8. Overt intervention by Soviet armed forces would be interpreted by other governments and peoples of the Middle East and South Asia as a direct challenge to the West, and a threat to their own security. Unless the West reacted with vigor and decision, these countries would probably be frightened into increasingly neutralist or weak policies in respect to the East-West struggle.

9. Turkey is so firmly committed to an anti-Communist stand that we do not believe its policy would be affected by a Communist take-over in Iran, ~~unless the response in the West was enough as to indicate a collapse of the~~ ~~anti-Communist~~ ~~international~~.